



## **Strive Overview**

Partners for Our Children (P4C) at the University of Washington has been working in close collaboration, since 2014, with the Washington State Department of Children Youth and Families (DCYF), and over 100 stakeholders to develop and test the *Strive* Supervised Family Time program. *Strive* is a parent education and support program that aims to engage parents in the family time process, assist parents in preparing for high quality family time with their children, and promote child safety. *Strive* uses a strengths-based, trauma-informed approach to help parents create a positive environment for nurturing their relationship with their child(ren) within the context of supervised family time. Parents are connected with a “*Strive* Navigator” (family time supervisor trained in *Strive*) who meets with them weekly during the program to cover session content and to support them during their family time to “try out” new knowledge and skills.

For the five weeks of *Strive*, parents work with the same *Strive* Navigator; a) meeting with them one-on-one, before their visit, for a one hour session for information and support regarding their visit, b) after the session, their *Strive* Navigator then provides a supported, supervised visit and c) they then have a 15 minute, one-on-one debrief with the *Strive* Navigator after the visit to discuss what went well and areas the parent wants to focus on in subsequent visits. The five sessions comprising *Strive* are:

- 1) **Getting Started** which is focused on building the relationship between the parent and *Strive* Navigator (SN) and deciding how to work together, identifying the importance of visits and, orienting parents to visitation rules and expectations;
- 2) **Connect and Reassure** provides parents with strategies for connecting with and reassuring their children and addressing feelings their children may be having in visits. The parent learns to create and use a visit routine to provide structure for the visit;
- 3) **Creating a Safe and Health Visit Environment** in which the SN provides the parent with age appropriate information on child safety in visits, and how to monitor, distract, and redirect their children and supports the parent in scanning the family time space for safety hazards for their child;
- 4) **Communication Counts** in which the SN supports the parents in practicing a strategy called Communicating Using Feelings and Needs to communicate with their children, as well as adults involved in their case;
- 5) **Child Directed Play** covers the benefits of parents spending time during family time following their child’s lead in play and the parent learns about and practices the elements of child directed play (Join, Watch, Describe, Follow, Copy, Praise).

In addition, infused throughout the curriculum, are opportunities for parents to learn and practice brief, **stress reduction** techniques to help them to: take in new information from the *Strive* sessions, be present for their visit with their children and, have self-calming strategies that can help them handle stressful situations that may arise.

Two pilot studies have been conducted on both the east and west sides of Washington State. The first pilot included 50 parents who received the *Strive* program and showed that parents receiving *Strive* had a **lower rate of missed visits** compared to a propensity score matched comparison group (7% vs 16%). The second pilot included parents randomized to receive the *Strive* program (n=58) or to a comparison group (n=50). Parents in both pilots were interviewed about their experiences in visits. *Strive* had a **significant positive impact on parent engagement** as well as the **quality of parent-child visits**. *Strive* group parents were also significantly more likely to report that their *Strive* Navigator showed **respect for their family’s culture and traditions**. Additionally, they were very **satisfied with the program** saying it **helped them in their visits** and **covered most of what was needed**. They uniformly **would recommend it to other parents**.

# Strive Adaptation Work

## 1) Strive Online

The *Strive* team, through a University of Washington CoMotion Innovation grant, has explored and created a sustainability plan for converting the *Strive* training to an online, e-learning format for providers and parents. Through interviews with providers and child welfare staff as well as piloting a provider and parent prototype and then surveying trainees, it was found to be a feasible plan to extend the reach of the program and to ensure its growth over time. *Strive* Online includes two training programs, one for family time providers and one for parents based on the proven *Strive* principles for enhancing well-being during family time.

### A. Provider Course:

#### 1. Foundational Learning (3 modules):

- Engaging Parents
- The Impact of Trauma on Child Development
- Trauma-Informed Family Time Services

#### 2. Tools for Supporting Parents (5 modules):

- Getting Started
- Connect & Reassure
- Safe & Healthy Family Time Environments
- Communication Counts
- The Importance of Play

#### 3. Extend Your Learning: 10 rapid training courses that extend the Foundational and Tools topics such as: Additional modules include: Intimate Partner Violence & Awareness, Supporting Sibling Relationships, Using Trauma-Informed Language with Families, Supporting Neurodiverse Parents and Children, and Working with Racially and Ethnically Diverse Families

#### 4. Special Topics: 5 modules that help round out required training topics that includes; Conflict Resolution & Verbal De-Escalation with Parents, Understanding Family Dynamics, Understanding Grief & Loss in Child Welfare, Maintaining Confidentiality During Family Time, and Parental Substance Use and Family Time

### B. Parent Course:

This is a five-module course that supports parents (with children birth to 8 years of age) in having the best quality family time with their children. There are a series of short lessons that you can complete in around 15-20 minutes each.

#### 1. Getting Started with Family Time

- Creating a Plan for Family Time
- Rules & Expectations
- Managing Stress
- Collaborating with Your Child's Caregiver

#### 2. The Power of Nurturing Yourself & Others

- Ways to Nurture Yourself
- Increasing Support for Family Time
- Nurturing Yourself Through Taping
- Supporting Your Child's Emotions

#### 3. Understanding Your Child's Development

- What is Child Development?

- Infants (0-12 months)
- Toddlers (1-3 years)
- Preschoolers (3-5 years)
- School-Aged (6+ years)
- Preparing to Communicate with Your Child

#### 4. **Managing Your Family Time**

- Creating a Family Time Routine
- Health & Safety for Your Child
- Encouraging Safe & Positive Behaviors

#### 5. **Connecting with Your Child**

- Responding to Your Child's Needs
- The Importance of Play
- Child-Directed Play
- The Benefits of Mindful Play

## 2) **Adaptation for Native Families**

From 2018 to 2022, with funding from a King County Best Starts for Kids grant, Partners for Our Children and Cowlitz Tribal Health Seattle developed and piloted a culturally adapted *Strive* program delivered by Native Family Time Partners to Native parents with children aged birth to five.

## 3) **San Francisco County, California**

In 2018, the *Strive* team has partnered with the San Francisco County Human Services Agency, Seneca Family of Agencies, and Family Resource Centers to deliver the *Strive* Supervised Visitation Program. To broaden access, the San Francisco County Human Services Agency translated the curriculum into Spanish and Chinese.

## 4) **New South Wales, Australia**

From 2017 through 2020, the *Strive* team partnered with Uniting, an NGO serving the Australian state of New South Wales to adapt and deliver *Strive* as part of their Permanency Support and Family Support Programs.

## 5) **Supportive Virtual Family Time**

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the *Strive* team created the Supportive Virtual Family Time program, a free, online training created to provide structure, guidance, and training for those supervising virtual parent-child visits. <https://allianceforchildwelfare.org/content/family-time-supportive-virtual-family-time-program-and-training-elearning>

## 6) **Family Treatment Court – King County, Washington**

In 2022, The *Strive* team collaborated with Amara to provide *Strive* to Family Treatment Court clients.

## **References:**

*Strive* is listed as a “Promising Practice” with the Washington State Institute for Public Policy (2020): [https://www.wsipp.wa.gov/ReportFile/1727/Wsipp\\_Updated-Inventory-of-Evidence-Based-Research-Based-and-Promising-Practices-For-Prevention-and-Intervention-Services-for-Children-and-Juveniles-in-the-Child-Welfare-Juvenile-Justice-and-Mental-Health-Systems\\_Report.pdf](https://www.wsipp.wa.gov/ReportFile/1727/Wsipp_Updated-Inventory-of-Evidence-Based-Research-Based-and-Promising-Practices-For-Prevention-and-Intervention-Services-for-Children-and-Juveniles-in-the-Child-Welfare-Juvenile-Justice-and-Mental-Health-Systems_Report.pdf)

*Strive* was rated by the California Evidence-Based Clearinghouse for Child Welfare (CEBC) as having *High Relevance for Child Welfare* and received a scientific rating of 3 – *Promising Research Evidence*.

California Evidence-Based Clearinghouse for Child Welfare. (2024 ). *Strive Supervised Family Time Program*. Retrieved August 6, 2025, from <https://www.cebc4cw.org/program/strive-supervised-family-time-program/>